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REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTY OF VULCAN NO. 2

MARCH 29 - APRIL 2, 1993

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Alberta
EDUCATION
Regional Office of Education

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May 10, 1993

Mr. John Darroch
Superintendent of Schools
County of Vulcan No. 2
Box 180
Vulcan, AB T0L 2B0

Dear John:

I am pleased to submit to you, to the members of your Board of Education, and to the school administrators and distance learning staff in the County, this report on the evaluation of the Distance Learning Programs in your senior high schools and in the junior high French as a Second Language.

I trust that the report will be helpful as the Board and staff engage in future planning for an improved program. I am most willing to meet with any of you to discuss the highlights of the report.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to the school administrators, and their staffs, students and parents for the many courtesies extended to the evaluation team during our stay in the County of Vulcan.

Sincerely,

Gary Hill
Education Consultant

GH/fa
Enclosure

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM REPORT
COUNTY OF VULCAN NO. 2

A. Overview

In the Spring of 1992, the Board of Education of the County of Vulcan requested, through its Superintendent of Schools, that an external evaluation of the County's Distance Learning Program (DLP) be conducted (see Appendix A). The Superintendent met with an Education Consultant from the Lethbridge Regional Office of Alberta Education and the Assistant Director of the Distance Learning Implementation Unit of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre to establish the Steering Committee and the Evaluation Team.

The Steering Committee's task was to draft the terms of reference on which the evaluation would focus. The Evaluation Team's task was to develop data collection instruments and to conduct the interviews. The data collection occurred during the week of March 29 to April 2, 1993.

B. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met on February 18, 1993 and March 3, 1993, and consisted of the following:

- John Darroch, Superintendent of Schools, County of Vulcan No. 2 (Chair)
- Rhonda Cornell, Student, County Central High School
- Marie Logan, Parent, Lomond School
- Wayne Bennett, Principal, Lomond School
- Gwen McMann, Administrator, Distance Learning Options South (DLOS)
- Bruce Akitt, Distance Learning Coordinator, County Central High School
- George Allen, Assistant Director, Alberta Distance Learning Centre
- Gary Hill, Education Consultant, Lethbridge Regional Office of Education
- Ed Fischer, Trustee, County of Vulcan No. 2
- Wayne Ericksen, Board Chair, County of Vulcan No. 2

This Committee drafted the Terms of Reference as listed in Section C and reviewed the interview questions drafted by the Evaluation Team (see Appendices B and C).

C. Terms of Reference

At the February 18, 1993 meeting, the Steering Committee developed the following Terms of Reference on which to base the evaluation:

1. **Policies**
   - review school and county policies to see if they are in the best interest of students
2. **Accessibility of Courses**
   - DL registration versus classroom-taught equivalent course
   - flexibility and inflexibility
   - decisions made on individual basis
   - high school courses for adult students
   - post-secondary courses for regular and adult students
3. **Finance**
   - costs versus revenue
4. **Resources**
   - hardware
   - print materials (format of the ADLC resources)
   - support materials (software, video/audio tapes)
   - phone
   - fax
   - facilities
   - computers (CML)
5. **Staffing**
   - effectiveness of staff development
   - number of professional staff and their duties
   - number of paraprofessional staff and their duties
6. **Student Evaluation Procedures**
   - standards of achievement (DL versus school-based)
   - success rates(completion rates)
   - student achievement levels
   - procedures for assessing student progress (tests, exams, assignments)
   - fairness
   - weighting of criteria and sources of marks
   - comparison of school-awarded marks and diploma exam marks of Diploma Exam courses

7. **Quality of Education**
   - breadth of courses taken
   - the need for courses
   - achievement levels
   - success rates
   - course availability
8. **DLOS**
   - service to the student
   - cooperation between school and consortium
   - availability of instructors
   - teleconferencing
9. **Delivery Models**
   - DLOS instructors
   - digital VAX (Math)
   - FAX and courier to DLOS
   - traditional correspondence lessons
10. **Junior High French As A Second Language**
    - the value to the junior high schools (feeder schools)
    - other complementary junior high courses
    - same delivery method for other senior high courses (i.e., on in-county delivery system)
    - costs - capital and personnel

D. Evaluation Team

The following comprised the Evaluation Team:

- Gary Hill, Education Consultant, Lethbridge Regional Office of Education (chair)
- George Allen, Assistant Director, Alberta Distance Learning Centre
- Noel Gour, Staff Officer, Alberta Teachers' Association

The team met on February 26, 1993 to draft interview questions (Appendices B and C) and to determine the process of selecting students, parents, and staff to interview.

E. Data Collection Process

During the week of March 29, 1993, interviews were conducted with the following random samples:

1. At each of Lomond and County Central High Schools (regarding the senior high DLP):
   a) 15 senior high students presently taking courses by distance learning (individual interviews)
   b) the parents of another 15 senior high students who are taking such courses (individual interviews)
   c) three senior high teachers not directly associated with the DLP (individual interviews)
   d) the Principal, the Distance Learning Coordinator, and the Distance Learning Paraprofessional (group interview)
2. At each of Champion, Milo, and Lomond Schools (regarding the junior high French As A Second Language (FSL) program being offered through Distance Learning):
   a) up to 12 students taking FSL (group interview)
   b) parents of up to eight other students taking FSL (individual interviews)
   c) the Principal and the school-based assistant for the FSL program (group interview)
   d) the instructor of the Junior High FSL program

Financial statements of 1991-92 were reviewed in the presence of the Supervisor of Finance and the Deputy Superintendent to ascertain the revenues and expenditures associated with the three Distance Learning Programs.

F. Findings

In order to appropriately describe our observations and because the three components of the Distance Learning Program operate very independently, the Evaluation Team chose to convey its findings of each program separately. Each description is organized according to the major headings in the Terms of Reference (see Section C).

I. County Central High School

1. Policies

The policies and guidelines that the school has established appear to be appropriate. Students enrolled in Distance Learning courses are aware of requirements and expectations.

Although teachers not directly associated with Distance Learning appear to be aware of the guidelines, they tend to have no involvement with the program. Concern is expressed about the lack of structure in the DLP and the need for such for many of the non-academic students. They perceive that the DLP is often viewed as a source of easy credits.

The school administrators and the DL Coordinator view the program as operating effectively. "Not only does it offer students a broader range of courses, but it has become one more step in our stay-in-school initiative," was the comment by the principal. Occasionally it has become the last alternative for the student who is unwilling to work in a regular program or whose misbehavior interferes with other students' learning.

Many parents are unaware of the policies that guide the DLP. Those who are aware are satisfied with the intent and expectations. Most would like to see firmer discipline in the DL Centre in order to provide a more productive learning atmosphere.

2. Accessibility of Courses

A broad range of courses is offered through Distance Learning Options South (DLOS), a consortium of Southern Alberta school jurisdictions operating out of the Lethbridge Community College. Of the 194 senior high students at County Central High, 86 individual students (44 percent) are taking courses through DLOS this year. The 146 course registrations average about 1.7 courses per DL student or about 0.75 course per all senior high students. The main reasons for registering in the DLP include: it is the best way to improve the mark (repeating the course); the course is not offered in the school's regular timetable; the regular timetable choices are unacceptable; and the self-pacing, independent working situation is more desirable.

The majority of courses taken are either complementary or non-academic core in nature. Students appreciate the opportunity to explore courses that fulfill their interests.

There is a concern expressed about the frequency with which the DLP is used as the only alternative for students with behavioral disorders or who lack

motivation. It is suggested by the three staff members interviewed that the DLP should be targeted for the more rigorously academic courses and that highly capable students are better suited to handle a program that needs a high level of self-responsibility.

On the other hand, many students felt that the DLP had allowed them to develop self-responsibility. All agreed that without self-discipline, the opportunity for success was very limited.

3. **Finance**

The County receives no DL grants for the program being offered at County Central High School. Assuming the costs for the 1992-93 school year will be similar to the figures available for the 1991-92 school year, the actual cost to the County is approximately $139 per credit ($126,005/909 credits). The majority of the costs comprise the full time DL Coordinator, the tuition fees to DLOS and, to a lesser extent, telephone and FAX link-up with DLOS and tutor-markers..

4. **Resources (includes Delivery Models)**

All courses use the print material developed at the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). Most require a great deal of reading and writing by the student. As each assignment is completed it is sent via facsimile transmission (FAX) to an instructor (tutor-marker) at DLOS to be marked and returned via FAX. As well, the Southern Alberta Learning Resource Centre courier is used to deliver and return projects and assignments. This process seems to work reasonably well.

Comments from a few students indicate that for most assignments, the answers can be copied word-for-word from the text. This is viewed as a fairly mundane, lower level cognitive type of activity. These students would prefer more comprehensive questions and more hands-on projects.

There are video and/or audio tapes for some of the courses although students never mentioned their use or availability.

The use of computers is for the mathematics courses only. Using DIGITAL hardware, the student and classroom teacher can supplement traditional resources. The amount of this hardware appears to be satisfactory.

5. **Staffing**

One full time certificated teacher beyond the County's staffing formula has been allocated to the DLP for the 1992-93 school year. This has allowed the principal to appoint a school-based DL Coordinator whose task it is to

assist students in registering for courses, monitoring the submission and return of assignments, tracking student progress, and supervising the DL Centre. The school Counsellor and Administrators also assist students in selecting appropriate courses.

6. Student Evaluation Procedures

Most students and about half of the parents surveyed state that grades on DL courses are higher than on the traditional classroom-based courses. A variety of reasons may account for this, including the fact that some students like to work independently and at their own pace rather than at the teacher's or the class' pace.

Surveyed teachers feel that lesson activities in some DL courses are questionable with regards to the amount of work required. These teachers report that they have seen poorly-completed assignments returned with a fairly high mark, causing them to conclude that marks in DL courses may be inflated.

Whenever a student completes a DL course in a fairly short time frame, it may have been an easy course (as some surveyed teachers believe), or the student may have put forth an intensive effort because completing it would give him/her a free period for the rest of the semester (as stated by a few students).

The DLOS Administrator and tutor-markers are aware of these concerns and have been making adjustments, placing more weighting on tests and quizzes, and less on lesson completion. A review of these criteria and weightings needs to be continued.

Due to the very low number of DL courses in the Diploma Examination subjects, no comparison of school-awarded marks to diploma exam marks was possible.

The Principal and the DL Coordinator regularly track student success rates and completion rates in DL courses. The previous semester's completion rate in semester one is reported to be in the 90 to 95 percent range.

7. Quality of Education

As previously stated, a broad range of courses is available through DLOS; however the majority taken through the DLP are the complementary or non-academic core type. Moreover, this broad range of complementary courses allows students the opportunity to explore study in specific areas of interest.

Although some students state that the level of difficulty on DL courses is comparable to teacher-taught courses, many agree that DL courses are easier. Reasons given for this perception include such things as the student prefers self-paced independent learning, the DL courses are well organized with concepts broken down into small steps, and the majority of courses taken are complementary and non-academic and therefore the assignments are more practical in nature.

Achievement levels were not checked by the evaluation team. However because students were unanimous that their grades in DL courses were either similar or higher than teacher-taught courses, it would be reasonable to assume that achievement levels are generally higher. Again, one must keep in mind that we are comparing academically rigorous courses to non-academically rigorous courses in most cases.

One facet of a quality education that many students and the school administrators commented on is the fact that independent learning has required many students to develop a higher level of self-responsibility, a characteristic most desirable for a successful life.

8. <u>Distance Learning Options South (DLOS)</u> (Includes Delivery Models)

DLOS, a consortium of several school jurisdictions in Zone 6, was established to provide an affordable, effective DLP to senior high students across the Zone. The traditional correspondence school resources available from the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC), Barrhead, were deemed satisfactory except that the turnaround time between lesson submission and lesson return via mail was considered too long. As well, the lack of tutor-markers through ADLC was a concern.

Through DLOS, assignments are faxed or delivered from the school to the instructor at DLOS and ready to be returned to the school generally within three days, providing the student with more immediate feedback. The print materials developed at the ADLC are the main resources used by the students. The instructional services available from DLOS tutor-markers was an extra service not available from ADLC.

All interviewees report that the service is generally satisfactory. The degree of cooperation between the school and DLOS is high and communication is positive.

Several points were raised by a few students. First, they appreciate receiving constructive criticisms on the returned assignments rather than

merely a mark. This does not always happen. They feel that if they realize why they lost points on a question, they better understand the concept.

Second, they appreciate the quick turnaround time by most instructors. It seems that a few of them may be overloaded with too many students or courses. No students expressed concern about the availability of tutor-markers for assistance. Instead they expect help from the DL Coordinator or from their peers who are also taking the course.

Third, some students indicate that they would like the opportunity to meet their tutor-marker, possibly at the beginning of the semester.

II. Lomond High School

1. Policies

The policies and guidelines under which the school's DLP operates appear to be satisfactory. The principal and the DL Coordinator have done a fine job of communicating these to the students, their parents and the entire school staff. As a result, it seems that everyone associated with the school is extremely supportive of the DLP and realizes its value. The majority of parents appear to be involved with and knowledgeable about their children's education.

2. Accessibility of Courses

Students and parents are pleased with the wide range of courses available through DLOS. All 26 senior high students are taking courses through the DLP, averaging about four courses per student per year.

Due to the small number of teachers, the school typically offers regular classroom instruction in many of the academically rigorous courses. Non-academic and complementary courses generally are offered through the DLP. Occasionally a student has used distance learning to take an academically rigorous course for which there was a very low enrolment.

3. Finance

Although the County receives an Alberta Education grant ear-marked especially for the Distance Learning Program at Lomond School, the County contributed an amount of $26,378 over and above the grant in 1991-92. Assuming the 1992-93 revenues and expenditures will be similar to those of 1991-92, this works out to a net cost to the County of $75 per credit ($26,378/350 credits). The majority of the costs comprise the half-time DL

Coordinator, the tuition fees to DLOS and to a lesser extent telephone and FAX charges to DLOS and tutor-markers.

4. **Resources (Includes Delivery Models)**

The description in Section 4 of County Central High generally pertains to Lomond High. Again many students commented on the strong reliance on reading and writing skills to complete the courses. Many students feel that the learning modules are clear and easy to understand.

Some students comment that some learning resources mentioned in the modules, such as audio or video tapes, are not always available. The teachers, the principal, and the DL Coordinator would like to see the incorporation of more technology as it becomes available. The teachers feel that in some courses, the DLOS tutor-markers need to incorporate more variety in the types of assignments.

Some parents, the principal, and the DL Coordinator state that specific materials or facilities required to complete projects within a course should be listed in the course registration information; e.g., neither Lomond School nor very many homes have a darkroom required for the photography component of Industrial Education.

5. **Staffing**

The DLP staff at Lomond School consist of a half-time DL Coordinator, a part-time paraprofessional (seven hours per week), and a few teachers who supervise students on DL courses for a few periods per week. This is beyond the County's regular staffing formula for Lomond School. The DL Coordinator and the paraprofessional work very much as a team in registering students for courses, assisting with lessons, submitting and returning assignments, and the overall supervision of the DL classroom.

The DL staff has very capably kept parents informed of high school graduation requirements and the importance of their involvement in their children's education, particularly the DL courses. They have also kept the entire staff informed about the DLP, its success rates, its completion rates, and its expectations of students in DL courses.

6. **Student Evaluation Procedures**

Most students and parents feel that the grades students receive in DL courses are higher than that of the regular classroom-taught courses. A number of reasons were stated for this: some students work better on their own than in classrooms; the marking system places too much emphasis on

assignments and not enough on tests (the teachers agree with this reason); the course content in the core courses (taught by the classroom teacher) is generally more academically rigorous than the complementary or non-academic courses (taken via DL).

7. **Quality of Education**

Students, parents, and staff are all very supportive of the DLP. Students commented on how DL has allowed them to explore and fulfill a variety of interests.

Some students feel that the core courses should continue to be classroom based, reserving DL for the complementary courses. This would allow for student-to-teacher and student-to-student interactions to occur in those core courses.

Especially in the DL courses, they suggest that encouraging a group of students to take the same course would facilitate interactive and cooperative learning. It appears that students at Lomond School are indeed encouraged to seek help from their peers.

Achievement levels were not checked by the evaluation team. However, because it was reported that the majority of grades received in DL courses are higher than the teacher-taught courses, it would be reasonable to assume that achievement levels are generally higher. Again one must keep in mind that this is often a comparison of more academically rigorous courses (classroom-based) to non-academically rigorous courses (DL based).

A quality of an educational program that the DLP has provided is the opportunity to explore a variety of interests which, for most, is an important benefit to this model of learning. A majority of parents surveyed state that the quality of learning via DL is as good as the quality of learning in classroom-based courses. Many feel that although the classroom interaction with peers and a teacher is very valuable, the development of self-motivation and independent learning through the DLP is also extremely beneficial.

8. **Distance Learning Options South (DLOS) (Includes Delivery Models)**

The services provided by DLOS are described in Section 8 of the County Central High report. Those comments are also appropriate for Lomond High.

Some Lomond students had additional comments. The first was mentioned previously - there needs to be more emphasis on testing and less on assignments when calculating grades.

Second, students seek help from a peer or the school's DL Coordinator or teachers before contacting the DLOS tutor-marker. Some students indicate that they would like more contact with the tutor-marker, particularly an opportunity to meet the tutor-markers annually.

Third, students appreciate the quick return of all assignments. The return time for assignments in a few courses seems to take much longer.

Some teachers feel that courses might be improved by using teleconference to provide student-to-teacher interaction, that some of the ADLC assignments should be supplemented by the DLOS tutor-markers, and that some of the tutor-markers need to be more rigorous when grading assignments.

Several students, parents, and staff state that occasionally tutor-markers are not available at the times indicated by the tutor-markers. Both students and the DL staff indicate a need for tutor-markers to write constructive comments on assignments before returning them to the school.

III. Junior High French As A Second Language (FSL)

The junior high students in Champion, Lomond, and Milo have the opportunity to participate in the FSL program via Distance Learning. A qualified French teacher operates out of an office in County Central High to provide instruction via teleconference and computer network.

A specified time is set for each school to be linked with her orally via telephone and in print via computer network using a Macintosh lab. In each of these three schools, a teacher assistant or the principal supervises each class in the computer lab, providing individual student assistance as they do their written work on the computers.

Each evaluation team member visited one of the three schools to interview a group of students, the principal and the teacher assistant, and several parents. As well, the centralized French teacher was interviewed at County Central High. The balance of this section summarizes our observations.

The degree of parental support in all three schools is high. They unanimously expressed that having FSL program is important, that it does meet the needs of their children and that it should be continued. Further the majority agreed that although it is desirable for students to learn a second

language, particularly one of Canada's two official languages, it is not advisable to make it mandatory for all students.

The school administrators provide positive support in the three schools. In one school, the grade seven compulsory enrolment and the larger class sizes have created some additional problems. These continue to be worked out.

Students in all three schools are generally supportive of the program, particularly those classes in which enrolment is not mandatory. Some students feel torn if they have to select between FSL or a fun course such as Cooking or Drama. Those senior high students who are taking French 10 through DL this year voiced strong support for the junior high FSL program. One DL Coordinator confirms that students currently taking French 10 through DL are experiencing less frustration as a result of having taken FSL via DL in junior high. One group suggested that it would be appropriate to begin FSL at an earlier age; e.g., Grade 5 or 6.

Students indicate that they enjoy activities that involve group work such as the games and the food activity when the FSL instructor visits their school. They also enjoy working on the computers although they become frustrated when assignments are lost electronically or there is a long wait for the FSL instructor to get back to them on the network.

The participation rate of students taking FSL at Champion is 84 percent (51/61), at Lomond is 67 percent (18/27), at Milo is 27 percent (6/29), and in the County by DL is 64 percent (75/117). The Grade 7 participation rate is highest and the Grade 9 participation rate the lowest.

There is agreement that the delivery method is improving as new technology is installed and the bugs are worked out. The sound reproduction during teleconferencing continues to need improvement. The Macintosh computer labs have been an excellent addition for the written work. The French modules are constantly being improved but continue to need updating.

The staff at one school express the belief that in the future other complementary courses at junior high and courses at senior high could indeed be offered with this same delivery method. The computer network and teleconferencing equipment are in place. If the curriculum modules can be developed, the idea is definitely feasible.

The instructional time for FSL scheduled for three 40-minute periods weekly in two of the schools is far more appropriate than the one 80-minute

period weekly for the one group in the third school. Frequency and shorter periods tend to be more productive when learning a second language.

Learning any language begins with the oral and auditory aspects prior to the written portions. For this reason it is important that at these beginning levels a greater emphasis be placed on oral activities and less on written assignments. Also during the oral activities, the FSL instructor needs to decrease the rate of speech used when speaking to these students just learning French particularly when teleconferencing is not as clear as face-to-face.

The relationship that has developed between the FSL instructor and the teacher assistants appears to be positive. The students and the teacher assistants appreciate the monthly visits the FSL instructor makes to the three schools. There is very limited opportunity for the teacher assistants and the FSL instructor to meet for joint planning and sharing. Some parents indicate that they would appreciate meeting the FSL instructor in person, possibly at the beginning of the year.

G. Commendations

a) The County of Vulcan is commended for:

1. The degree of financial support provided to offer distance learning programs in four of its schools:
   i) no distance learning grants are provided for the staffing and tuition costs at County Central High School
   ii) approximately half the costs of the distance learning program at Lomond High are reimbursed through distance learning grants
   iii) approximately eight percent of the FSL program costs are covered by French language grants. No distance learning grants are received for this program.
2. The innovative delivery of FSL instruction to the junior high students at Champion, Lomond, and Milo utilizing computers and teleconvenors.
3. Establishing a Macintosh computer lab in the junior high schools.

b) County Central High School is commended for:

1. The high level of support and commitment which the school administration exhibits toward the DLP.
2. The monitoring of student progress on computer and the establishment of lesson completion timelines by the DL Coordinator.

3. The high level of parent and student satisfaction with the number and variety of courses offered - both conventional and distance learning.
4. Providing a comfortable distance learning environment in a large double classroom.
5. The level of completion and success rates maintained in the DLP courses.

c) Lomond School is commended for:

1. The high level of support and commitment which the school administration and staff exhibit toward the DLP.
2. The high level of communication that the school administration and staff have created between the school and community regarding distance learning courses, registration, policies, and guidelines.
3. The level of completion and success rates maintained in the DLP courses.
4. Setting clear completion standards and expectations for DL courses.
5. The high level of parent and student satisfaction with the number and variety of courses offered by DL.

d) Distance Learning Options South is commended for:

1. Its strong working relationship with its member schools and jurisdictions.
2. The number and wide variety of courses available to schools and students.
3. The manner and speed with which course materials are made available.

H. Recommendations

a) It is recommended that the County of Vulcan:

1. Continue to communicate concerns to DLOS respecting tutor-markers.

Considerable comment came from stakeholders that the current level of contact from tutor-markers to students is insufficient. In addition, many comments were received indicating that tutor-markers are not supplementing existing course materials with enough tests and quizzes. In some cases, marking is seen as too easy. Constructive, instructional comments should be placed on most assignments before being returned.

2. **Explore alternatives to the current form of tutor-marker delivery.**

   It may be possible to utilize present in-district staff to serve as tutor-markers (e.g., a low enrolment course in County Central High School may be able to accommodate small numbers from Lomond School).

3. **Review the total number of credits delivered at Lomond School and County Central High School with a view toward balancing the desire for course variety with cost effectiveness.**

   Some limits may need to be set as to total credits the County is able to underwrite in a given year, and as to the acceptable criteria for enrolling in a distance learning course.

4. **Provide some minor improvements to the technology currently in use for the junior high FSL program.**

   A "hands-free" telephone headset would enable the FSL instructor to use both computer and telephone simultaneously and more effectively. Students at receiving schools would benefit from either a cordless phone set or a length of extension cable to permit easy phone movement from student to student.

5. **Review the present form of delivery of FSL at Champion School.**
6. **Continue to support the delivery of necessary courses by distance learning.**
7. **Allow more frequent visits by the FSL instructor to the schools to reinforce learning experiences.**

   Use of this time to administer exams should be discouraged.

8. **Review the deployment of staff for the FSL program.**

   The assignment of a professional staff member as teacher assistant in Milo may not be affordable.

9. **Establish written policy for distance learning and communicate same through appropriate schools and school councils.**

b) **It is recommended that the County Central High School:**

1. **Administration review the total number of credits offered and the course entry criteria for the DLP.**

   It is noted that some 909 credits were offered in 1991-92 and, while commendable, may not be affordable.

2. **Administration review the workload of the school's DL Coordinator to ensure that current demands are within reasonable expectations.**

3. **Administration establish greater communication and involvement between the DLP and the rest of the school staff to ensure all are working toward a common understanding of distance learning.**

c) **It is recommended that the Lomond School:**

1. **Administration review the total number of credits delivered by distance learning to ensure that it is accessing the maximum number of credits eligible for distance learning grants.**

   For example, in 1991-92 the County was eligible to receive grants for up to 484 distance learning credits at Lomond School, while actual delivery totaled only 387 credits.

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF REQUEST FOR AN EVALUATION

COUNTY OF VULCAN NO. 2

"TOGETHER — WE CAN"

BOARD OF EDUCATION

TELEPHONE 485-2241 — P.O. BOX 180, VULCAN, ALBERTA TOL 2B0 — FAX 485-2920

OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

1992-5-25

Dr. Terry Rusnack, Liaison Consultant
Alberta Education
Lethbridge Regional Office
Provincial Building
200 - 5th Avenue South
LETHBRIDGE, AB
T1J 4C7

Dear Terry:

RE: SCHOOL/PROGRAM EVALUATIONS
1992-93 SCHOOL YEAR

Further to our telephone conversations earlier today, I wish to confirm our request for consideration of the following evaluations to be conducted under the auspices of Alberta Education's Lethbridge Regional Office:

1. School Evaluations
   - Hazel Cameron Elementary School
   - preferred time February, 1993
   - collegial model similar to that at Foothills School Division that Edna was involved in
   - Foothills owes us our system staff time which we can use in this project

2. Distance Education
   - a review of our Distance Education Program across the system
   - will include basically Lomond High School, C.C.H.S., and distance learning French offered to Grades 7-9 at Milo, Champion and Lomond

Yours truly,

John Darroch
Superintendent of Schools

cc: E. Meehan
JD:dmd

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APPENDIX B
DISTANCE LEARNING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Senior High)

The Senior High School Students (To be interviewed individually)

1. What courses have you taken, or are you taking, through distance learning or correspondence?

2. Why did you choose distance learning courses?

3. Describe the involvement of school-based teachers in your distance learning courses. For example, in registering, getting materials and resources, helping you with your problems, providing tutoring or instruction, marking, recording your progress, faxing lessons, and so on.

4. Who are you expected to go to for help with DL courses?

5. Who do you actually go to for help with DL courses?

6. What happens if you didn't get distance learning course assignments done on time?

*7. If you have taken more than one course through distance learning, did you find a difference between the courses (e.g., the way they were taught, the materials available, difficulty)? [Build on response to question #1]

*8. How do your grades compare between distance learning courses and courses taught locally in your schools?

*9. When you were studying for your distance learning course(s) and needed help, how did you get it (e.g., no help, local teacher in school, coordinator, off-site teacher, someone else)?

10. What qualities did you need to be successful in distance learning courses?

11. What qualities should a DL tutor-marker possess?

12. What qualities should the school's DL Coordinator possess?

*13. What are two or three of the things you like about the distance learning program?

*14. If you could make changes in the program, what changes would you like to see? [Build on students' response to #1]

15. Would you recommend to other students that they take courses through distance learning?

*16. Do you wish to make any other comments regarding Distance Learning?

The Senior High School Teacher **(To be interviewed individually)**

*1. To what extent and in what ways are you involved in the distance learning program?

*2. a) Has your teaching assignment changed since the introduction of the program?

b) If yes, in what ways?

*3. What are your expectations of the student who is taking a course by DL?

*4. Where is a student expected to be while working on a DL course?

*5. Who at the school is expected to monitor a student's progress?

6. a) In your opinion, are the duties of all personnel associated with DL in this school clearly understood?

b) Are these duties/roles well articulated?

7. How does this school monitor and evaluate the program?

8. a) In your opinion, is the distance learning program in your school effective?

b) Why?

9. a) Does the program benefit the students in your school? Consider both the students who enroll in distance learning courses and those who do not.

b) Why or Why not?

10. How could the program be improved?

11. What do you see as the future for DL in your school?

*12. Do you wish to make any other comments regarding Distance Learning?

The Senior High School Principal, the DL Coordinator , and the DL Assistant
(To be interviewed as a group)

1. Describe the DL program in your school.
2. Why is your school offering distance learning courses?
3. a) Describe the duties of the principal, distance learning coordinator, and other staff members involved in the DL program.

   b) In your opinion, are the roles well articulated?
4. a) Are you aware of the policies of the school and the consortium regarding DL?

   b) Are the current school and consortium policies consistent with your expectations of DL?
5. What distance learning activities demand the most of your time and attention?
6. What assistance for these demands do you receive, and from whom?
7. What inservice do you see as necessary?
8. What goals has your school set for the distance learning program?
9. What action plan has your school implemented for the program?
10. In your opinion, has the distance learning program been an enhancement to your school? (Please elaborate)
11. Has additional staff been assigned to your school as a result of the program?
12. In your opinion, is the staffing complement (both certificated and paraprofessional) appropriate and used effectively?
13. What level of satisfaction do you perceive your staff to have with the distance learning program? What about those not participating directly?
14. How is the DL program in your school monitored?
15. a) Describe the relationship between your school and off-site distance learning instructors.

    b) In what ways could this relationship be improved?

16. What do you see as the future for distance learning in your school?

17. How can the DL program be improved?

18. Do you wish to make any other comments regarding DL?

The Senior High School Parent **(To be interviewed individually)**

1. Describe the extent to which your son/daughter has taken DL courses?

2. Is your son/daughter able to take the courses wanted, either by distance learning or in classes taught in the local school?

3. a) Has the DL program made a difference to the educational program your son/daughter is taking?
   b) Why or Why not?

4. In your opinion, is there sufficient variety of courses offered either through DL or regular classroom instruction?

*5. In your opinion, how do your son/daughter's grades compare between DL courses and courses taught in the school?

*6. Do you feel that your son/daughter learned as much through the DL courses as s/he would have through the regular school-based courses?

7. When your son/daughter was taking a DL course, was s/he able to get the necessary help? For example, how satisfied are you with the current Student to Tutor-Marker contact?
8. As a parent, how are you informed when your son/daughter is enrolled in a distance learning course?

9. Who would you contact at the school if you had a question about your son/daughter's progress in distance learning courses?
*10. How are you informed about your son/daughter's progress in distance learning courses?

*11. As a parent, is this progress reporting sufficient?

12. Are you aware of the school policies regarding DL?

13. Are the policies consistent with your expectations of DL?

*14. How can the DL program be improved?

15. Would you recommend to other parents that their son/daughter take courses through DL?

16. What do you see as the future for distance learning in your school?

*17. Do you wish to make any further comment regarding DL?

APPENDIX C
FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions To Ask

The Student

1. Who are you expected to go to for help with your junior high school French course?

2. Who do you actually go to for help with your junior high French course?

3. What happens if you didn't get your French assignments done on time?

4. What are two or three things you like about learning French this way?

5. If you could make changes in this program, what changes would you like to see?

6. Would you recommend to other students that they take junior high French through distance learning?

7. For those of you who took French last year by distance learning, how has the course changed? Is it improved? Are you more satisfied with the course this year than last year?

8. How often does the French teacher visit the school? Are these visits enough/not enough/too many?

9. Is the school-based staff able to help you with your French course?

10. Do you think the program should continue to be offered to Grades 7, 8, and 9? Should the course be restricted to Grade 7 and 8 only, or perhaps Grade 9 only?

11. Should French be a compulsory course at the:

    - Grade 7 level?
    - Grade 8 level?
    - Grade 9 level?

High School Students Only

12. If you took junior high French by distance learning, was the program beneficial to your high school French studies?

Principal, Paraprofessional, Teacher(s)

1. Describe the junior high French program in this school?

2. Why is your school offering French by distance learning?

3. In your opinion, has French by distance learning been an enhancement to your school? (Please elaborate)

4. What level of satisfaction do you perceive staff members to have with this program? What about those not participating directly?

5. How is the junior high French program monitored?

6. What inservice would you see necessary?

7. Describe the relationship between your school and the off-site French instructor?

8. How could the junior high French program be improved?

9. How is French scheduled into the student's timetable?

10. Do you feel this course offers an important alternative for your junior high school students?

11. Do you feel this course is meeting the expectations of parents?

12. What is the total number of students enrolled in junior high French this year? vs. total population?

13. Describe the budget/resources made available to the school for junior high French by distance learning?

14. Should French be a compulsory course at the :

    - Grade 7 level
    - Grade 8 level
    - Grade 9 level

High School French Teacher Only

15. Do you perceive students to have benefitted who took junior high French by distance learning? Explain.

16. Any other comments?

Parents

1. Has the distance learning French program made a difference to the educational program your son/daughter is taking? Why or why not?

2. In your opinion, how do your son/daughter's grades compare between the distance learning French course and courses taught in the school?

3. Do you feel your son/daughter has learned as much through this distance learning course as he/she would have in a conventional classroom?

4. While your son/daughter has been taking this French course, was he/she able to get the necessary help? For example, how satisfied are you with the current student to tutor-marker contact?

5. Who would you contact at the school if you had a question about your son/daughter's progress in the French program?

6. How are you informed about your son/daughter's progress in the distance learning French program?

7. As a parent, is the progress reporting sufficient?

8. How could the program be improved?

9. In your opinion, is the program appropriately supervised?

10. Is it important to you that French be offered through distance learning? Does it meet the needs of your son/daughter? Should it continue to be offered?

11. Do you have any concerns about the way the program is being offered?

12. Should French be a compulsory course at the:

    - Grade 7 level
    - Grade 8 level
    - Grade 9 level

13. Any further comments?